

# Comprehension Activities: Story Extensions

These comprehension activities are story extenders designed to extend and deepen children's knowledge of the text read aloud. These activities also feature opportunities for children to give elaborated responses or more extensive dialogue.

Note: These activities were adapted with permission from the Developing Talkers: Pre-K © supplemental lessons.

## Describe Characters & Setting

**Children identify and describe characters and setting in the text.**

**MATERIALS:** *text, chart pad or large dry erase board, markers*

1. Tell children that *characters* are the people or animals the story is about. Tell children that the *setting* is the place(s) where the story happens.
2. Ask the children to think about the characters and setting(s) as you read or review the text.
3. After reading or reviewing, write the word characters and setting on a chart pad.
4. Review each of the key characters in the text. Ask children to describe as much as they can about each. Write children's responses on the chart.
5. Review each of the key settings in the text. Ask children to describe as much as they can about each as you write their responses on the chart.

*Variation 1:* When first teaching the concept of character and setting, only describe one or the other. Your chart would only have either the word character or setting at the top.

*Variation 2:* After creating a character chart, ask children to name their favorite character and explain why. Or after creating a setting chart ask children which setting they would most like to visit and why.

### Example

Characters	Setting

## Event Sequence

**Children retell a story by using sequence picture cards or a simple story map.**

**MATERIALS:** *text, picture cards that represent major events in the story or paper, markers*

1. Tell the children that a story has a beginning, middle and end.
2. Read or review the text with the children. Pause to summarize the major events in the story.
3. After reading, ask the children to help you remember what happened in the text.
4. Spread the pictures cards that represent the story on the table. Ask children to put them in order.
5. For each picture, ask students to recall what happened in the beginning, middle, and end of the text.

*Variation:* On different pieces of paper write children's responses as they retelling the beginning, middle and end of the story. Ask children to try to put the events in order. (No pictures required for variation.)

### Example Basic Story Map

Story Title \_\_\_\_\_

**Beginning**  
At first....

**Middle**  
Then...

**End**  
In the end ...

## Story Retell

**Children retell a text to dramatically reenact the events or recall the major events in the text.**

**MATERIALS:** *text, picture cards representing each character or sentence strips, markers*

1. Ask the children to think about the story and tell what they remember happened. Help the children to tell as much as they can about the characters, settings, and major events. You can flip through the pages of the book to review what happened first, second, third, etc. but do not reread the entire story.
2. Assign the children roles they will play as the characters in the story. Hand children picture cards that represent each character to hold or wear as a necklace. (Drawing roles randomly can prevent competition for particular roles.). You may also choose to hand children setting cards if this helps them to retell their portions of the story.
3. Retell major events in the text using the appropriate pages in the book, as need if children need extra support. Encourage children to dramatically play their role by talking about the character, setting, and what happened.

**Variation:** Rather than using picture cards have children simply recall all events they can from a text. Write each event on a sentence strip. Help children review the events and place the sentence strips in order.

### Example

Assign roles for *The Three Little Fish and the Big Bad Shark* with character cards

Mama Fish	Big Bad Shark	Jim (Fish)	Tim (Fish)	Kim (Fish)
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## Concept Sort

**Children sort picture cards into groups with similar meanings. This will help develop a better understanding of the key concepts and will encourage children to use complex reasoning skills.**

**MATERIALS:** *small picture cards cut so that each child has the same set of individual cards to sort (4 to 8 cards)*

1. Choose an important concept from a text that you want children to think more deeply about that has two or more categories.
2. Select an assortment of picture vocabulary cards that represent each category. Create small, individual sized picture cards that children can sort.
3. Sorting may be a difficult task for young children; therefore, closed sorts are often appropriate. In a closed sort the teacher provides headers for each topic or category, then children look for pictures that fit the category.
4. The teacher tells children the headers and asks all children to place their headers side by side.
5. The teacher models sorting the first few cards into the appropriate category and thinks aloud about why the cards go together.
6. Children sort their own cards independently. While students work, teachers can ask children about their choices and confirm or help students rethink their sorting.
7. When all students have finished sorting the group checks their sorts. This includes asking at least one child to explain why they chose each category.

**Variation:** As children become more familiar with sorting, an open sort may be useful. This is a more difficult task than a closed sort. In an open sort, the headers for the categories are not predetermined and there may be more than one logical way to sort the cards. When teaching open sorting, teachers first think out loud and show the children how to think about the picture cards, asking themselves how do these go together? What do they have in common? Then children choose pictures that go together and then label the category.

### Example

If teaching the concepts of spring and winter that were the settings for a book, you could sort pictures of the following objects:

Summer	Winter
sunny day	snowy day
swimsuit	coat
beach	snowman
watermelon	hot cocoa
shovel and pail	sled

## Cause/Effect Pictures

Children are exposed to cause and effect relationships with picture cards and graphic organizers.

MATERIALS: *text, picture cards, cause and effect chart (chart pad/large dry erase)*

1. Prepare a cause and effect chart with two columns.
2. Read or review the story to the children.
3. Discuss with the children what happened in the story and the result of the situation.
4. As each cause and effect is encountered, ask questions. For example, ask the children what happened? What was the result?
5. Help children find the picture cards that represent that cause and effect and let children place them on the card.

### Example

Cause What happened?	Effect What was the result?

## KWL Chart

Children use prior understandings to think about the topic of the read aloud or unit and then reflect on new learning after reading or at the end of the unit.

MATERIALS: *chart paper, markers*

1. Make a KWL chart (What We Know – What We Want to Learn-What We Learned).
2. Discuss with the children what they know about the topic of the book that is about to be read or the new unit you are starting. Write down what the children say they know.
3. Ask the children what do you want to learn about from this story or during this unit? Write the answers in the middle column.
4. Read the story or complete the unit. If you are using the KWL chart during the unit, you should keep it posted as a work in progress that is updated throughout the unit.
5. After reading the story or completing the unit, ask the children what they learned. Record their answers on the chart.

### Example

What We Know	What We Want to Know	What We Learned